

## When to consider a joint evaluation

Extract from Guidance for Managing Joint Evaluations, DAC Evaluation Series, OECD, 2006, pp 12-13.

The decision on whether to conduct an evaluation singly or jointly is taken on a case-by-case basis and with careful consideration of the possible benefits and challenges. Some of the specific factors in deciding whether to undertake an evaluation singly or jointly include:

- **Focus.** Evaluations focusing on co-financed programmes, on national aid effectiveness or sectoral goals, on the evaluation of a multilateral or regional development agency, on issues that are too sensitive or controversial for one agency alone to tackle, and broad thematic or meta evaluations can often most appropriately be undertaken jointly.
- **Purpose.** If they are to reduce transaction costs joint evaluations must be undertaken in place of and not in addition to individual donor evaluations. For evaluation processes to be effectively rationalised, it is therefore important to undertake joint evaluations that meet each partners' accountability needs as well as lesson learning objectives.
- **Scope.** A joint evaluation's scope is often comprehensive as each participating agency may have issues and questions it wants addressed. A joint evaluation may be inappropriate if an agency wishes an evaluation to remain very focused and wants to remain exclusively in control of the scope. Conversely, if the evaluation questions are very broad a joint evaluation can be an advantage as the workload and costs can be shared.
- **Timeframe.** If an organisation is in a great hurry to get an evaluation completed, joint approaches may be disadvantageous. The collaborative nature of joint evaluations tends to increase their complexity which often increases the length of time needed for the evaluation. However, some very complex joint evaluations have been completed quickly. For example, the comprehensive joint evaluation of international emergency assistance to Rwanda was completed in part because of the high-level political interest in the subject matter in only a little over a year. Silent partnerships, delegation of responsibilities to individual agencies, or the joint development of a common evaluation framework to be applied by different stakeholders in different contexts all offer ways to undertake joint work while minimising the time delays that can be generated by intensive co-ordination.